

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response is being filed in connection with the Office Action dated March 25, 2003. Claims 1, 82, 106, 129 and 153 have been amended hereby. Claims 4, 96, 117 and 143 have been canceled hereby. Previously, Claims 8, 81, 100, 128 and 158 were canceled. Accordingly, Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-80, 82-95, 97-99, 101-116, 118-127, 129-142, 144-157 and 159-168 are now pending.

In the Office Action dated March 25, 2003, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 12, 17-19, 38-44, 51, 75-80, 82-83, 86-99, 106-116, 125, 129, 130, 133-142 and 153-155 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,134,171. The Examiner also indicated that, for example, Claim 4, was merely objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have incorporated the limitation of Claim 4, namely, that the storage and use (or operative) degradation rates are less than about 50% of the disposal degradation rate, into all independent claims. Thus, Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and early allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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